

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Ages Birth - 5

Guide and What You Need to Know

Connecticut's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder

1/24/2019

A quick reference checklist and guide for parents and/or caretakers of a child with Autism.

Connecticut's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services



Ages Birth-5

Early Intervention

- Contact the CT Birth to Three System 1-800-505-7000 www.birth23.org pg.4
- Explore child care and preschool options 1-800-505-1000
<http://search.211childcare.org/> pg.4
- Prepare to transition from CT Birth to Three System to the local school system pg.4

Health and Medical Care, and Related Therapeutic Interventions

- Understand the current diagnostic criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder pg.6
- “Connecticut’s Guidelines for a Clinical Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder”* pg.7
- Learn about evidenced-based practices and therapies pg.7
- Explore behavioral supports if necessary pg. 7
- Develop a system to organize your paperwork pg.7

Assistive Technology

- Learn about assistive technology devices and adaptations pg.7
- Explore financial assistance for assistive technology pg.8

Education

- Learn about the special education process and IEP’s pg.9
- Connecticut’s State Department of Education *“A Parent’s Guide to Special Education in Connecticut”* pg.9
- Prepare to transition from CT Birth to Three System to the local school system pg.4
- Explore daycare and preschool options pg.4
- Understand your child’s educational needs pg. 9
- Develop positive behavioral intervention plans pg.10
- Get involved in your local Special Education Parent Organizations (SEPTO) pg.11

- Contact your local Family Support Network www.ctfsn.org pg.10
- Develop a system to organize education records pg. 11

Social and Relationships

- Help your child learn about appropriate social skills pg.11
- Engage in recreational and leisure activities that your child and family enjoy pg. 11

Safety

- Teach your child about the ‘Uh-Oh’ feeling and “Tricky People” pg.11
- Discuss what is appropriate talk and touch pg.12
- Address wandering and elopement pg.12
- Be aware of potential household dangers pg.13
- Practice street safety pg. 14
- Enroll your child in swimming lessons if possible pg.13
- Establish a safety network (including first responders) in case of an emergency pg.13
- Familiarize yourself with community play spaces and their boundaries as well as their proximity to possible dangers (i.e. roads, ponds, river, pools) pg. 14

Funding for Services and Legal Issues

- Apply to the Department of Social Services Division of Autism Spectrum Services www.ct.gov/dda (Eligibility still determined through Department of Developmental Services) pg.14
- Determine if your child is eligible for Social Security Benefits www.ssa.gov pg.14
- Explore insurance coverage for autism services pg. 15
 - Connecticut Autism Insurance Law
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder services under Medicaid/HUSKY A—Beacon Health Options
1-877-552-8247
- Direct questions regarding ASD insurance issues to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate pg.15
1-866-466-4446
- Learn about life planning tools pg.15
 - Achieving a Better Life Experience(ABLE) Act
 - Special needs trusts
- Explore tax deductions and exemptions for children with special needs pg.16
- Develop a system to organize financial and legal records pg.16

Support

- Network with others at support groups pg.16
- Identify your support system pg. 16
- Explore daycare options pg.4
- Take care of yourself, your spouse and your other children pg. 17

Advocacy

- Learn how to advocate for your child

pg.17

Additional Resources

- Who to contact at the DSS Autism Unit

pg.18

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Early Intervention

CT Birth to Three System

The [Connecticut Birth to Three System](#) is a state program operating under the requirements of Part C of the federal “Individuals with Disabilities Act”. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity of families to meet the developmental and health-related needs of their infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities.

All children in Connecticut up to age 3 who have significant delays in development, or certain medical conditions that can cause delays, are eligible for services.

The team from the early intervention program will work with your family and your doctor in choosing the kinds of support and interventions that can best help you help your child.

Services are provided in places that are natural for your child, including your home, child care setting, and other places where your child usually spends time, so that these new ways of teaching your child become part of your family’s daily routine.

Anyone who is concerned about a child’s development may call Child Development Infoline toll free at 1-800-505-7000 (TDD accessible) to make a referral, including parents, guardians, health professionals and child care providers. If someone other than the child’s parent or guardian makes the call, the parents will be contacted for their permission to proceed further.

SOURCE: UWC 211 website eLibrary

Explore Child Care and Preschool Options

Referrals, counseling, and information about licensed day care centers and family day care homes, nursery schools, school age programs, summer camps, and in-home services. Also, 2-1-1 Child Care website posts the availability survey, fee reports, information on how to become a licensed family day care provider, and a searchable child care database. Anyone may call the 2-1-1 Child Care at 1-800-505-1000 or by visiting <https://www.211childcare.org/>

SOURCE: UWC 211 website

Prepare to Transition from CT Birth to Three System to the Local School System

Moving from program to program is called transition. Support from Birth to Three ends when your child turns age 3. He or she may “transition” to preschool special education offered by your local school

district. It is essential that families, Birth to Three service providers, and school district personnel walk through this transition process together.

To insure that the process is smooth and that services are in place no later than your child's third birthday, it is essential that families, Birth to Three service providers, and school district personnel walk through this transition process together, one step at a time.

To plan ahead:

Your family can:

- Begin to discuss what types of programs or services you would like for your child and family after Birth to Three services end
- Talk about transition with your service coordinator
- Give written permission to your Birth to Three program to notify your school district about your child at least six months before your child turns three. If you prefer, you may contact your school district yourself by phone or letter at any time. Starting the process early offers the best opportunity for a smooth transition.

Birth to Three Staff will:

- Provide your family with information about transition
- Begin the process by developing the transition plan section of the IFSP and identifying outcomes with your family
- Assist you in referring your child to your local school district for an eligibility evaluation
- Schedule a transition planning meeting with your family and the school district staff up to six months, but at least 90 days before your child's third birthday.

School District staff will:

- Work with your family and the Birth to Three staff on transition planning
 - Introduce your family to the school district's planning and placement team members and school staff
 - Describe the process for determining whether your child is eligible for preschool special education.
- Transitioning out of Birth to Three

What is a transition meeting?

With your permission, Birth to Three staff will convene a meeting to discuss services your child may receive after you and your child leave the Birth to Three program. For children who may be eligible for preschool special education, the meeting will include your family, Birth to Three staff and preschool special education staff. This meeting will take place at least 90 days before your child's third birthday. At the meeting, the transition plan section of the IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) will be completed. The plan will outline the steps that your family, your Birth to Three program staff and school district staff will take to address the end of Birth to Three services and the transition to new programs, services and people.

Some questions to ask at the Transition Meeting:

- How will the school district decide if my child is eligible for special education?
- What kind of testing will be needed?
- Who can we call if we have questions?

At the Transition Meeting:

Your family can:

- Share your hopes for your child
- Participate in the transition process at the level that feels comfortable to you
- Ask questions about anything that is unclear

Birth to Three staff will:

- Share information about your child's progress in the Birth to Three program
- Participate in transition planning
- Help write a transition plan with specific steps for transition
- Help you identify additional community resources and supports

School District staff will:

- Participate in the transition planning process
- Explain your child's and your rights as a parent
- discuss eligibility for preschool special education and determine whether additional evaluation information is needed
- If your child is determined eligible, discuss the options for providing the special education services needed by your child. If additional information is needed in order to determine your child's eligibility, the school district planning and placement team will describe the kind of testing that will be done. It may be formal or informal. Some of the information may be gathered in natural, play-like situations. Other tests may require specific activities. Your permission will be required for this testing.

The following link is to the Family Handbooks page which provides Transition information. For English please visit <https://www.birth23.org/files/Families/FamilyHandbookIII.pdf> and for Spanish please visit <https://www.birth23.org/files/Families/FamilyHandbookIII-SP.pdf>

Information about preschool contacts and the contact person for scheduling a Transition conference in each town, please visit <https://www.birth23.org/locations/>

SOURCE: Connecticut Birth to Three Website

Health and Medical Care, and Related Therapeutic Interventions

Understand the Current Diagnostic Criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder

The DSM-5 is now the standard reference that healthcare providers use to diagnose mental and behavioral conditions. Understand the current diagnostic criteria for ASD by visiting Autism Speaks website at <https://www.autismspeaks.org/dsm-5-criteria>

Review “Connecticut’s Guidelines for a Clinical Diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder”

Read into depth information related to Autism Spectrum Disorder, the diagnostic evaluation, evaluation results, early intervention and special education. Visit https://uconnuicedd.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/1340/2015/06/CT_Guidelines_for_Clinical_Dx_of_ASD.pdf

Learn about Evidenced-based Practices and Therapies

The EBP is an intervention and instructional practices or programs having scientific evidence that shows that they are effective. To know more please visit the Organization For Autism Research website at <https://researchautism.org/use-of-evidence-based-practices/>.

Select an evidence-based practice to access a module about the practice at <https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/evidence-based-practices>

Explore Behavioral Supports if Necessary

People with Autism may display behaviors that are challenging to understand or manage. Autism Speaks offers *The Challenging Behaviors Tool Kit* which provides strategies and resources to address challenging behaviors and help support you during difficult times. To download a FREE toolkit, visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/challenging-behaviors-tool-kit>

Develop a System to Organize Your Paperwork

Raising a child with Autism has its rewards and has its challenges. To assist parents with the overwhelming amount of paperwork your child may have, *Pathfinders for Autism* developed a template you can use to help organize all that paperwork <http://pathfindersforautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/A-Guide-to-Organizing-Your-Paperwork.pdf>

Assistive Technology

Learn about Assistive Technology Devices and Adaptations

Assistive technologies can be used to support and enhance communication for people with autism with or without speech impairments. **Autism Speaks** offers an **Assistive Technology for Communication Roadmap** to help individuals learn how to start using assistive technologies for communication <https://www.autismspeaks.org/worksheet/assistive-technology-communication-roadmap> or call the Autism Response Team at 1-888-288-4762.

NEAT Marketplace (New England Assistive Technology Center)- Provides information, assistive technology assessments, instruction and demonstration of the latest adaptive equipment
www.neatmarketplace.org

Assistive Technology Corner at State Education Resource Center (SERC)- Displays of low, mid and high tech AT devices Contact them at 860-632-1485 x4 or library@ct.serc.org

Connecticut Assistive Technology Guidelines- Guidelines for considering, implementing, and evaluating assistive technologies from low- to high-tech www.ct.gov/sde Link "Forms and Publications">Publications

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Connecting Young Kids (YAACK)- Provides information and guidance to families and professionals, covering a wide range of topics dealing with AAC for children at various ages and stages of communicating abilities
http://www.childdevelopmentprograms.ca/resource_category/augmentative-and-alternative-communication/

Center on Technology and Disability- Assists families and professionals in advocating, acquiring and implementing effective assistive and instructional technology practices, devices and services as well as offers an extensive library and an interactive learning center
www.ctdinstitute.org

Explore Financial Assistance for Assistive Technology

Aid for Autistic Children & Families- If you need help paying for autism related hospital bills, therapies, early intervention, adult late intervention or any obstructive debt resulting from decisions made in an effort to structure one's life routine around care for an autistic child or loved one.
<http://www.aacfinc.org/contact.html>

Autism Care Today- Provides financial assistance for services that the person would otherwise not be able to afford. Areas of support include but are not limited to: ABA Therapy, Assistive Technology, Medical Testing & Treatments, Speech and Occupational Therapy, Safety Equipment, Summer and Social Programs, and Quality of Life Supports <http://www.act-today.org/our-funds/autism-care-today/>

Autism Family Resource Grants- One-time \$500 grants are awarded to families in financial need; household income may not exceed \$50,000 per year. All funds awarded are paid directly to the vendor or service provider to pay for therapy equipment, safety equipment or services. Email requests for an application along with name, address, phone number and email address to:
info@autismfamilyresources.org

Jaden's Voice- Provides funding to families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our assistance supports a family's immediate expenses related to the well-being of the family member diagnosed with autism on a case-by-case basis. Examples include: effective treatments, assessments, adults who are actively looking for employment or need additional supports, graduate minority students specializing in autism in the areas of speech, behavior or occupational therapy, parent groups, etc.
<http://jadensvoice.org/jadens-voice-cares-grant-program/>

Medic Alert Foundation- Autism Medical IDS & 24/7 wandering support services
<https://www.medicalert.org/autism#importance-of-autism-wandering-support-services> or
1.800.432.5378

National Autism Association- Provide Communication devices to individuals with autism who are non-verbal or minimally verbal, and whose communication challenges put them at increased risk of injury or harm <http://nationalautismassociation.org/family-support/programs/naas-give-a-voice-program/>

Organization for Autism Research- provides a tool kit and assist with fundraising for services needed. 1-866-366-9710

Pervis Jackson Jr Autism Foundation- Pervis Jackson Jr Autism Foundation helps needy parents of children with disabilities to get respite or other support services. Grants can be used for Camp Sessions, Respite of Parent's Choice, Cleaning Help, Cooking Help, Spa Day, Urgent Bills, Other Parent Needs.
www.pjjraf.org

Education

Learn About the Special Education Process and IEP's

People with autism have a number of legal rights and protections. It is important to understand these rights to ensure that you or your child is being treated fairly and given access to all of the services and supports to which you are entitled. For more information, visit *Autism Speaks* website <https://www.autismspeaks.org/your-childs-rights> . Here you will get a quick overview of your child's rights for public information, what is free and appropriate public education, early intervention services, how to get services started, rights to assistive technologies, and more.

Review Connecticut's State Department of Education "A Parent Guide to Special Education in CT"

This publication, from the CT State Department of Education, provides a clear explanation of the laws, regulations and policies affecting special education programs and services https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Parents_Guide_SE.pdf

Prepare to Transition from CT Birth to Three System to the Local School System

Refer to pages 4

Explore Child Care and Preschool Options

Refer to page 4

Understand Your Child's Educational Needs

The document that spells out your child’s needs and how these needs will be met is the Individualized Education program (IEP). To know more about the IEP, the IEP meeting, teacher/staff requirements, goals and objectives, visit the *Autism Society* website at <http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/academic-success/individualized-education-plan-iep/>

You can also review **“A Parent Guide to Special Education in CT”** which is a publication from the CT State Department of Education. It provides a clear explanation of the laws, regulations and policies affecting special education programs and services. Within the publication is information on IEP’s https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Parents_Guide_SE.pdf

Read *“Educational Options for Children with Autism”* by Verywell Health. Provides information about Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), mainstreaming and autism, inclusion and autism, support in the classroom, public, private, and home school options <https://www.verywellhealth.com/educational-options-for-children-with-autism-260393>

Develop Positive Behavioral Interventional Plans

If your child exhibits behaviors that impede learning for themselves and others, you can incorporate a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) into your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). For more information visit the Car Autism Roadmap website at <https://www.carautismroadmap.org/behavior-intervention-plan/>

Did you know any use of restraint is to be documented in the child’s educational record and, if needed, in the child’s school health record?

The Connecticut State Department of Education has published ‘Understanding the Laws and Regulations Governing the use of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools: July 2018’, which provides an in-depth look at definitions, Connecticut statutes, and regulations schools follow when restraining or putting a child into seclusion. Visit https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/Understanding_the_Laws_and_Regulations_Governing_the_Use_of_Restraint_and_Seclusion_in_Schools.pdf

Inclusion Evolution provides information on providing your child’s school with a “No Consent” letter for restraint and seclusion. As part of positive behavioral plan, you can request this letter be included in your child’s official records <https://www.inclusionrevolution.com/child-needs-no-consent-letter-restraint-seclusion/>

Get involved in your local Special Education Parent Organizations (SEPTO)

Be part of your school districts Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO). These organizations typically focus on the needs and issues encountered by special education students and parents/guardians. For more information, call your local school district.

Contact your local Family Support Network

Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN) is a parent-to-parent organization offering support groups, training, email list serve, information and advocacy www.ctfsn.org

Develop a System to Organize Education Records

Having a child with special educational needs will generate loads of documents. Knowing what to save, throw away or make a priority is challenging. Visit the **Wrightslaw** website and find tips on how to organizing your child's special education documents by visiting <https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/organize.file.htm>

Help Your Child Learn About Appropriate Social Skills

Autism Speaks offers literature on social skills and autism. Within the reading you will find tips to personalize a template to teach your children of appropriate social skills in various settings such as going to a restaurant, going to the store, handling bullying, potty training, and much more. Visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/social-skills-and-autism>

Another website you can use is **Raisingchildren.net.au**. This website provides information about ASD and teaching parents how to teach children social skills through role-play and video-modelling. Visit <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/communicating-relationships/connecting/social-skills-for-children-with-asd#strategies-for-developing-social-skills-nav-title>

Engage in Recreational and Leisure Activities that your Child and Family Enjoy

Leisure activities are an important part of life for everyone. Finding fun and enjoyable activities for an autistic child may be more challenging due to difficulties in behavior, social interaction and communication. Visit **Autism Awareness Centre Inc.** and read "Developing Leisure Activities for Individuals with ASD" to learn about leisure activities <https://autismawarenesscentre.com/developing-leisure-activities-for-individuals-with-asd/>

Autism Speaks provides information about the benefits of recreation and provides answers to frequently asked questions. Visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/recreation-0>

Safety

Teach your Child about the 'Uh-Oh' feeling and "Tricky People"

For a long time, the 'Stranger Danger' concept taught children all strangers were potential dangers. Nowadays, studies show most abductions occur from someone the child knows. According to David Finkelhor (2013), "But children taken by strangers or slight acquaintances represent only one-hundredth of 1 percent of all missing children. The last comprehensive study estimated that the number was 115 in a year."

SOURCE: Finkelhor, D, (2013, May). *Five myths about missing children*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-missing-children/2013/05/10/efee398c-b8b4-11e2-aa9e-a02b765ff0ea_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.acc67eafd044

The '**Uh-Oh**' Feeling teaches children to trust their gut feeling when they know something is wrong, even if it's unknown at the time. Teach your children to tell a parent, teacher, or trusted grownup. To learn more about the Uh-oh feeling, visit <https://www.whenigrowupcoach.com/the-uh-oh-feeling/>

Another article you can use to teach children about the 'Uh-Oh' Feeling and trusting their intuition <https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/the-uh-oh-feeling/>

'**Tricky people**' teaches children that a tricky person can be someone known or unknown to the child and does something that breaks a safety rule or asks you to do something that makes the child feel uncomfortable <https://www.kidspot.com.au/health/family-health/safety/the-tricky-people-lesson-you-need-to-teach-your-kids/news-story/36dd4010c5f49a893948561e493f02fc>

To learn more about teaching stranger safety to children with ASD, visit Autism <http://blog.stageslearning.com/blog/teaching-autism-stranger-safety>

Discuss What is Appropriate Talk and Touch

Learning about bodies and body parts can help your child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) understand and feel comfortable with her body. It also lays the groundwork for teaching your child about personal boundaries and safety, including good and bad touch <https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/development/physical-development/bodies-boundaries>

Parents and children can also view the following short clip video titled '*Safe Touch/Unsafe Touch*' at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNTUMNKSNow>

The **Jacob Wetterling Resource Center** also provides a guide for age appropriate conversation starters to teach your children about "bad touch" <http://www.gundersenhealth.org/ncptc/jacob-wetterling-resource-center/keep-kids-safe/personal-safety/age-appropriate-conversations/>

Address Wandering and Elopement

Wandering and Elopement is all too common among children with Autism. This puts families under a high level of stress and puts children with Autism at high risk of harm. Becoming familiar with these behaviors, planning and implementing safety strategies can prevent a preventable tragedy.

Autism Speaks offers wandering prevention, preparedness and response tips for families with a child with Autism. Visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/wandering-prevention-resources>

Pathfinders for Autism provide literature, tips, and guides related to wandering and elopement. Visit <https://pathfindersforautism.org/resources/safety/wandering-and-elopement/>

Be Aware of Potential Household Dangers

Safety in the home environment for children in general is a major concern for parents and caregivers, let alone if a child in the home has Autism.

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

Practice Street Safety

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

The **National Autistic Society** provides social stories, toys, and interactive games to teach children with autism about road safety <https://www.autism.org.uk/roadsafety>

Enroll your Child in Swimming Lessons if Possible

Aquamobile offers an article titled “Autism and Drowning: Why Kids With Autism Are More Likely To Drown” which provides facts and reasons why children with Autism have a high mortality rate due to drowning <https://aquamobileswim.com/autism-and-drowning-why-kids-with-autism-are-more-likely-to-drown/#.XEiP87LrvGg>

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

Establish a Safety Network (including first responders) in Case of an Emergency

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may

affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

Autism Speaks provides tips and a guide for safety within the community including safety planning, getting around, asking for help, using public rest rooms, interacting with law enforcement, and more just to name a few <https://www.autismspeaks.org/safety-community>

Familiarize Yourself with Community Play Spaces and Their Boundaries as well as their Proximity to Possible Dangers (i.e. roads, ponds, river, pools)

Goric website offers an article offering tips on choosing a playground for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder <https://goric.com/asd-friendly-play-choosing-playground-kids-autism-spectrum-disorder/>

The **Organization for Autism Research** provides a guide composed from parents, first responders, educators, and community members, who shared their strategies and resources to address safety threats that commonly arise during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. This autism safety resource will educate parents about how to prevent and mitigate emergency events, safety threats that may affect their child in the future, and how to teach safety habits that will build a foundation for safety in adulthood <https://researchautism.org/resources/a-guide-to-safety/>

Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN) provides a listing of summer camps, recreation programs, and family destinations for children with special needs <http://www.ctfsn.org/summercamps>

Funding for Services and Legal Issues

Apply to the Department of Social Services Division of Autism Spectrum Services

Visit www.ct.gov/dds (Eligibility is still determined through the Department of Developmental Services).

- Left hand side select 'Divisions' > DSS Autism Spectrum Services (This is at DSS) > Eligibility > scroll down and select 'Please Follow this link for eligibility application'
- Or
- From the DDS homepage www.ct.gov/dds- Left hand side select 'Families' > select the



'Early Childhood' icon > select the DDS Eligibility box **DDS Eligibility** > then select **Application for Someone with Autism and NO Intellectual Disability over the age of 3** > select 'Autism Eligibility > Application

Determine if Your Child is Eligible for Social Security Benefits

Cash payments for low income older adults, ages 65+, or for people with a physical or mental impairment expected to last at least 1 year or to result in death, are made to assure an income. Low birth weight infants weighing less than 1200 grams (2 pounds 10 ounces) at birth may be eligible for

presumptive disability payments. Up to 6 months of PD payments may be made to an infant who is age 6 months or younger at the time of the PD finding and whose birth certificate or other evidence indicates a birth weight of less than 1200 grams. Call 1-877-405-4874 or visit www.ssa.gov

SOURCE: UWC 211 Website

Explore Insurance Coverage for Autism Services

Autism Speaks Initiative provides answers to frequently asked questions about the Autism Insurance Reform Law and what you need to know http://advocacy.autismspeaks.org/atf/cf/%7B2A179B73-96E2-44C3-8816-1B1C0BE5334B%7D/Connecticut_FAQs.pdf

Beacon Health Options (1-877-552-8247) offers clinical mental health and substance use disorder management, a comprehensive employee assistance program, work/life support, specialty programs for autism and depression, and insightful analytics to improve the delivery of care. Beacon manages the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) benefits for Medicaid beneficiaries who have Husky A, C, and D and are under age 21. A feature of the program provides access to a Beacon Peer Specialist and Care Coordinators to assist with explaining benefits covered under Medicaid, helping families navigate the health care system, and coordinating non-traditional services <https://www.beaconhealthoptions.com/who-we-are/>

Direct Questions Regarding ASD Insurance Issues to the Office of the Healthcare Advocate

Office of the Healthcare Advocate (1-866-466-4446) Provides assistance with selecting health insurance coverage. Agency will answer questions about health insurance issues, including, but not limited to, enrollment/eligibility issues, clarification of plan benefits, plan benefit limitations, and out-of-network services www.ct.gov/oha

Learn about Life Planning Tools

ABLE National Resource Center- Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) account - ABLE Accounts, which are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families, were created as a result of the passage of the Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 or better known as the ABLE Act. The beneficiary of the account is the account owner, and income earned by the accounts will not be taxed. Contributions to the account, which can be made by any person (the account beneficiary, family and friends), must be made using post-taxed dollars and will not be tax deductible for purposes of federal taxes, however some states may allow for state income tax deductions for contribution made to an ABLE account <http://www.ablenrc.org/about/what-are-able-accounts>

Special Needs Trust (SNT's) are well-established savings tools that also protect eligibility for public programs <https://www.specialneedsalliance.org/able-accounts-and-snts-how-to-choose/>

Explore Tax Deductions and Exemptions for Children with Special Needs

Autism Support Network provides information regarding tax planning for parents with children with autism <http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/tax-planning-parents-children-autism-221234>

Talk About Curing Autism (TACA)- provides information regarding tax advantages and deductions for parents of children with special needs <https://tacanow.org/family-resources/tax-strategies-for-parents-of-kids-with-special-needs/>

Develop a System to Organize Financial and Legal Records

Pathfinders for Autism- offers a guide to organizing your paperwork <http://pathfindersforautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/A-Guide-to-Organizing-Your-Paperwork.pdf>

Wrightslaw- You need a simple, foolproof document management system. In this article, you will learn how to organize your child's file. After you organize the information about your child into a file, you will have a clearer understanding of your child's disability and needs <https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/organize.file.htm>

Support

Network with Others at Support Groups

Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN) - Parent-to-parent organization offering support groups, training, email list serve, information and advocacy www.ctfsn.org

Autism Services and Resources Connecticut (ASRC)- Provides advocacy and support groups, recreational and social opportunities, trainings, newsletter, and information www.ct-asrc.org

For a more comprehensive listing of information related to *Support Groups*, please contact the DSS Autism Unit and speak with an Autism Support and Resource Specialist by calling Nathaniel Calixto, 860-424-5677, or Cathleen Calaway, 860-424-5567 or visit the DSS Autism website <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Health-And-Home-Care/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder---ASD/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder---ASD>

Identify your Support System

Autism Speaks – Offers tips and guidance to parents and caregivers related to identifying and/or creating a support system after a child has been diagnosed with Autism <https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-and-your-family>

Stepping Stones- Webpage has an article providing information on the importance of having a support system and some tips on how to develop one <https://www.steppingstonesca.com/single-post/2016/11/20/Building-a-support-network-when-dealing-with-ASD>

Explore Day Care Options

Refer to page 4

Take Care of Yourself, your Spouse and your other Children

Synapse- website offers self-care tips to parents of parents with an autistic child <http://www.autism-help.org/family-autism-self-care-strategies.htm>

Autism Resources and Community (ARC)- website offers parents an article on self-care <http://blog.stageslearning.com/blog/autism-parents-self-care>

Advocacy

Learn how to Advocate for your Child

Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN) - Parent-to-parent organization offering support groups, training, email list serve, information and advocacy www.ctfsn.org

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) - Provides information and support to families of children with disabilities from birth to 26 years www.cpacinc.org

Autism Services and Resources Connecticut (ASRC)- Provides advocacy and support groups, recreational and social opportunities, trainings, newsletter, and information www.ct-asrc.org

Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA) - Provides free advocacy and assistance to resolve healthcare and insurance issues 1-866-466-4446 www.ct.gov/oha

Family Advocacy Program (FAVOR)- Offers training, technical assistance and, support to parents and caregivers www.favor-ct.org

Center for Children’s Advocacy www.kidscounsel.org

CT Families for Effective Autism Treatment (CT FEAT) - Provides information, training, support and networking. It has a “Parents Only” internet discussion list. www.ctfeat.org

Autism Families CONNECTicut - An organization formed by a group of parents and family members that provides recreational, cultural and social activities for children with ASD. www.autismfamiliesct.org

PATH Parent to Parent and Family Voices of CT- A network of families providing informational and emotional support to others who have a child with developmental or health related needs. www.pathct.org

Wrightslaw- Provides advocacy, legal information, support www.wrightslaw.com

Your Special Education Rights- Video based resource for parents to provide them with the knowledge to advocate for their child’s education www.yourspecialeducationrights.com

CT Network for Legal Aid (Special Education) - Free legal help for people with low income
<http://ctlawhelp.org/special-education-in-connecticut>

Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut- Advocacy, legal representation, advice, and information for all education related issues for people with low income www.slsct.org

Connecticut Legal Services- Provides legal representation for people with low income. Priority area include: divorce, child support and other aspects of family law, housing subsidies, all aspects of public benefits (SNAP, Medicaid, SSI etc.), special educations, employment related issues
www.connlegalservices.org

Additional Resources

For a more comprehensive listing of information related to Autism Spectrum Disorder, please contact the DSS Autism Unit and speak with an Autism Support Resource Specialist:

Nathaniel Calixto
Autism Support and Resource Specialist
Nathaniel.Calixto@ct.gov
Tel: 860-424-5677
Fax: 860-920-3170

Cathleen Calway
Autism Support and Resource Specialist
cathleen.calway@ct.gov
Tel: 860-424-5567
Fax: 860-920-3170

***Please note: The contents of this document are provided solely for informational purposes. It is meant to give individuals with ASD and their families a choice regarding services and supports. The DSS Autism Division does not specifically recommend or endorse any individual provider or practitioner.